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**STARK JOINS COLLEAGUES IN BIPARTISAN, BICAMERAL OPPOSITION TO THE  
CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT**

WASHINGTON, DC – With a hearing on the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) scheduled for Thursday before the House Ways and Means Committee, U.S. Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA) joined a bipartisan gathering of House and Senate colleagues, labor and business groups today to speak out against the trade agreement.

“The message of CAFTA is clear: cheap labor is more important than labor rights, big profits are more important than clean air and water,” said Rep. Stark. “CAFTA will take away good paying jobs here in America and threaten the health and well being of people throughout Central America. That’s not a fair or responsible bargain for any of us,” Stark said.

Stark joined Reps. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Senators Larry Craig (R-ID) and Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and a large bipartisan, bicameral coalition of Congressional colleagues in announcing his opposition to CAFTA. As a senior member of the Ways and Means Committee that oversees trade policy and the Ranking Democrat on its Health Subcommittee, Stark took issue with the flawed intellectual property provisions of the trade agreement that impact public health. He criticized CAFTA for barring countries from the compulsory licensing of prescription drugs when they are necessary to protect public health.

“When the working poor of Central America get sick due to abysmal labor and environmental standards, they won’t have access to the medicine they need,” said Stark. “The profit hungry drug companies wrote CAFTA’s intellectual property provisions to block these poor countries from making lower cost generic drugs available to their people. That’s greedy, shameful and wrong.”

Organizations represented the bipartisan, bicameral event were the Citizens Trade Campaign, National Farmers Union, National Family Farm Coalition, United States Business Industry Council, American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition, AFL-CIO, Sierra Club, Oxfam America, LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens), Public Citizen, UNITEHERE, Interfaith Working Group, Lutheran World Relief, and the Global Aids Alliance.